

HEALTH RISK BEHAVIORS

In a recent CDC document, “Stories from the Field: Lessons Learned about Building Coordinated School Health Programs,” a number of coordinated school health program success stories illustrated various connections between student health and academic achievement.⁽³⁾ In and out of the classroom, students develop and reinforce behaviors that will determine outcomes for their lifetime. Lessons learned about risky behaviors can impact not only student’s present health while in the school setting, but also their health as productive adults in society.

The CDC groups health risk behaviors among students into the following categories:

- Behaviors that contribute to injury
- Tobacco use
- Alcohol and other drug use
- Sexual behaviors
- Unhealthy eating
- Inadequate physical activity

Health risk behaviors can affect education outcomes, education behaviors, and students’ attitudes. Coordinating, enhancing, and supporting existing health-related programs and services enable us to identify and address program gaps, maximize staffing and funding, and minimize duplications that will meet the needs of our Kentucky children and youth.

One tool schools can use to develop a Coordinated School Health Program (CSHP) is a book by Fetro entitled Step by Step to Health Promoting Schools.⁽⁴⁾ Fetro recognizes five factors that can affect program adoption: (1) student’s developmental level, (2) geographic or regional location, (3) local needs and concerns, (4) funding sources, and (5) school board policies.